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EYES ONLY FOR COLLINS FROM SECRETARY.

I am somewhat disturbed lest our position become too rigid on fundamental political questions regarding the future of Vietnam. The ultimate form and organization of the state and the government must be left to the Vietnamese to decide in an orderly manner. These are matters of high state policy which need to be concerted between us before we give committal. It strikes me this is not the time to declare for or against any particular form of the state.

During the past week Congressional leaders in both Houses have expressed more and more frequently their support for Diem and their opposition to Bao Dai. The latter is truly unpopular in the US. US Congressional and public opinion would care little and probably much approve if he were removed from the scene.

Of course we would like preserve basis of legitimacy of the government by some orderly process rather than by revolutionary action. But even here we must keep flexibility and not become publicly committed. We are primarily concerned with whether government effectively controls country and has genuine anti-Communist and nationalist support.

If Diem and the free nationalist groups apparently now rallied together can stay united, maintain the undivided loyalty of the army, and gain genuine backing of the people in the country, US support can continue to be forthcoming.

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I repeat, an important aspect of our policy must be flexibility and adjustment so that we can move according to evolution of the situation.

DULLES



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